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A CALM

ADDRESS

TO

OUR AMERICAN

COLONIES.

By JOHN WESLEY, M. A.

*Ne, pueri, ne tanta animis affuescite bella,
Neu patriæ validas in viscera vertite vires.*

VIRGIL.

A NEW EDITION, CORRECTED, AND ENLARGED.

L O N D O N,

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M. J. A. C. A.

A D D R E S S

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OUR AMERICAN

COLONIES

A. M. MILLER, JR.

...in which the ...

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

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To the READER.

I Was of a different judgment on this head, till
I read a tract intitled, "Taxation no Ty-
ranny." But as soon as I received more light
myself, I judged it my duty to impart it to others.
I therefore extracted the chief arguments from
that treatise, and added an application to those
whom it most concerns. I was well aware of
the treatment this would bring upon myself: but
let it be, so I may in any degree serve my King
and Country.

A late tract, wrote in answer to this, is wrote
in just such a spirit as I expected. It is strowed
over with such flowers as these, "Contemptible
Sophistry!" "Fallacious to the last degree!"
"Childish quirks!" "Pitiful sophisms!"

With strong assertions, repeated over and over, and with florid Quotations. But all the arguments which are produced therein, may be contained in a nut-shell.

*The writer * asserts twenty times, " He that is taxed without his own consent, that is, without being represented, is a slave." I answer, No: I have no representative in Parliament. But I am taxed; yet I am no slave. Yea, nine in ten throughout England, have no representative, no vote. Yet they are no slaves: they enjoy both Civil and Religious Liberty to the utmost extent.*

He replies, " But they may have votes if they will, they may purchase Freeholds." What! Can every man in England purchase a Freehold? No: not one in an hundred. But be that as it may, they have no vote now. Yet they are no Slaves, they are the freest men in the whole world.

" Who

** Or Writers. For I am informed by a correspondent in Bristol, That this Letter was wrote by two Anabaptist Ministers, assisted by a Gentleman and a Tradesman of the Church of England.*

P R E F A C E.

v

“Who then is a Slave?” Look into America, and you may easily see. See that Negro, fainting under the load, bleeding under the lash! He is a slave. And is there “no difference” between him and his Master? Yes. The One is screaming, Murder! Slavery! The other silently bleeds and dies!

“But wherein then consists the difference between Liberty and Slavery?” Herein. You and I, and the English in general, go where we will, and enjoy the fruit of our labours: This is liberty. The negro does not: This is Slavery.

Is not then all this outcry about Liberty, and Slavery, mere rant, and playing upon words?

This is a specimen of this writer’s Arguments. Let us just touch upon his Quotations.

“All the inhabitants (of England) says the fanciful Montesquieu, (as one terms him) “have a right of voting at the election of a representative, except such as are so mean, as to be deemed to have no will of their own!” Nay, if all have a right to vote, that have a will of their own, certainly this right belongs to every man, woman, and child in England.


One quotation more. "Judge Blackstone says, In a free state, every man who is supposed to be a free-agent, ought to be in some measure his own governor: therefore one branch, at least, of the legislative power should reside in the whole body of the people." But who are, the whole body of the people? According to Him, every free agent. Then the argument proves too much. For are not Women free-agents? Yea, and poor as well as rich men. According to this argument, there is no free state under the sun.

The Book which this writer says, I so strongly recommended, I never yet saw with my eyes. And the words which he says I spoke, never came out of my lips. But I really believe, he was told so.

I now speak, according to the light I have. But if any one will give me more light, I will be thankful.

ADDRESS, &c.

BRETHREN and COUNTRYMEN,

1.  THE grand question, which is now debated, (and with warmth enough on both sides) is this, Has the English Parliament a right to tax the American Colonies?

In order to determine this, let us consider the nature of our Colonies. An English Colony is, a number of persons to whom the King grants a charter, permitting them to settle in some far country as a corporation, enjoying such powers as the charter grants, to be administered in such a manner as the charter prescribes. As a corporation they make laws for themselves: but as a corporation subsisting by a grant from higher authority, to the control of that authority, they still continue subject.

Considering this, nothing can be more plain, than that the supreme power in England has a legal right of laying any tax upon them for any end beneficial to the whole empire.

2. But you object, "It is the privilege of a Freeman and an Englishman to be taxed only by his own consent. And this consent is given for every man by his representative in parliament. But we have no representatives in parliament. Therefore we ought not to be taxed thereby."

I answer, This argument proves too much. If the parliament cannot tax you, because you have no representati therein, for the same reason it can make no laws to bind you. If a freeman cannot be taxed without his own consent, neither can he be punished without it : for whatever holds with regard to taxation, holds with regard to all other laws. Therefore he who denies the English Parliament the power of taxation, denies it the right of making any laws at all. But this power over the Colonies you have never disputed : you have always admitted statutes, for the punishment of offences, and for the preventing or redressing of inconveniences. And the reception of any law draws after it by a chain which cannot be broken, the necessity of admitting taxation.

3. But I object to the very foundation of your plea. That "every freeman is governed by laws to which he has consented,"

as

as confidently as it has been asserted, is absolutely false. In wide-extended dominions, a very small part of the people are concerned in making laws. This, as all public business, must be done by delegation: the delegates are chosen by a select number. And those that are not electors, who are far the greater part, stand by, idle and helpless spectators.

The case of electors is little better. When they are near equally divided, in the choice of their delegates to represent them in the parliament or national assembly, almost half of them must be governed, not only without, but even against their own consent.

And how has any man consented to those laws, which were made before he was born? Our consent to these, nay and to the laws now made even in England, is purely passive. And in every place, as all men are born the subjects of some state or other, so they are born, passively, as it were consenting to the laws of that state. Any other than this kind of consent, the condition of civil life does not allow.

4. But you say, *You are intitled to life, liberty and property by nature: and that you have never ceded to any sovereign power, the right to dispose of these without your consent.*

While you speak as the naked sons of nature, this is certainly true. But you presently declare, *Our ancestors at the time they settled these Colonies, were intitled to all the*
rights

rights of natural-born subjects, within the realm of England. This likewise is true: but when this is granted, the boast of original rights is at an end. You are no longer in a state of nature, but sink down into Colonists, governed by a charter. If your ancestors were subjects, they acknowledged a Sovereign: if they had a right to English privileges, they were accountable to English laws, and had ceded to the King and Parliament, *the power of disposing without their consent, of both their lives, liberties and properties.* And did the Parliament cede to them, a dispensation from the obedience, which they owe as natural subjects? Or any degree of independence, not enjoyed by other Englishmen?

5. *They did not indeed, as you observe, by emigration forfeit any of those privileges: but they were, and their descendants now are intitled to all such as their circumstances enable them to enjoy.*

That they who form a Colony by a lawful charter, forfeit no privilege thereby, is certain. But what they do not forfeit by any judicial sentence, they may lose by natural effects. When a man voluntarily comes into America, he may lose what he had when in Europe. Perhaps he had a right to vote for a knight or burghers: by crossing the sea he did not forfeit this right. But it is plain, he has made the exercise of it no longer possible. He has reduced himself from a voter to one of the innumerable multitude that have no votes.

6. But

6. But you say, *As the Colonies are not represented in the British Parliament, they are entitled to a free power of legislation. For they inherit all the right which their ancestors had of enjoying all the privileges of Englishmen.*

They do inherit all the privileges which their ancestors had : but they can inherit no more. Their ancestors left a country where the representatives of the people were elected by men particularly qualified, and where those who wanted that qualification were bound by the decisions of men whom they had not deputed. You are the descendants of men who either had no votes, or resigned them by emigration. You have therefore exactly what your ancestors left you : not a vote in making laws, nor in chusing legislators ; but the happiness of being protected by laws, and the duty of obeying them.

What your ancestors did not bring with them, neither they nor their descendants have acquired. They have not, by abandoning their right in one legislature, acquired a right to constitute another : any more than the multitudes in England who have no vote, have a right to erect a Parliament for themselves.

7. However the Colonies have a right to all the privileges granted them by royal charters, or secured to them by provincial laws.

The first clause is allowed : they have certainly a right to all the privileges granted them

them by royal charters: (provided those privileges be consistent with the British constitution.) But as to the second there is a doubt: provincial laws may grant privileges to individuals of the province. But surely no province can confer provincial privileges on itself! They have a right to all which the King has given them; but not to all which they have given themselves.

A corporation can no more assume to itself privileges which it had not before, than a man can, by his own act and deed, assume titles or dignities. The legislature of a colony may be compared to the vestry of a large parish: which may lay a cess on its inhabitants, but still regulated by the law: and which (whatever be its internal expences) is still liable to taxes laid by superior authority.

8. But whereas I formerly allowed, "If there is in the charter of any Colony, a clause exempting them from taxes for ever, then they have a right to be so exempted;" I allowed too much. For to say, That the King can grant an exemption from the power of Parliament, is saying in other words, That One branch of the legislature can grant away the power of the Others. This is so far from being true, that if there is in the charter of any Colony, a clause exempting them from taxes for ever, yet unless it were confirmed by an act of the whole Legislature, that clause is void in itself. The King (to use the phrase of the law)

law) was "deceived in his grant," as having given that which he had no right to bestow.

Of all these charters then it may be said, Either they do contain such a clause, or they do not. If they do not, the plea of Charter-exemption drops. If they do, altho' the Charter itself stands good, yet that clause of it, is null and void, as being contrary to the principles of the British Constitution.

9. Give me leave to add a few words on this head: The following Acts shew clearly, that from the Restoration, the Colonies were considered as part of the *Realm of England*, in point of Taxation, as well as every thing else.

25th, Charles II. Chap. 7. expressly relates to the Colonies; and lays several specific duties on commodities *exported* from the plantations.

9th Ann, Chap. 10, orders a revenue to be raised in America from the Post-Office.

9th Ann, Chap. 27, lays a duty on several goods *imported* into America.

3d George II. Chap. 28, lays a duty on all Rice *exported* from Carolina, to the South of Cape of Finisterre.

8th Geo. II. Chap. 19, extends the same to Georgia.

6th Geo. II. Chap. 13, lays several duties on Rum, Sugar and Molasses *imported* into North America.

10. All that impartially consider what has been observed, must readily allow, that the English Parliament has an undoubted right to tax all the English Colonies.

But whence then is all this hurry and tumult? Why is America all in an uproar? If you can yet give yourselves time to think, you will see, the plain case is this.

A few years ago, you were assaulted by enemies, whom you were not well able to resist. You represented this to your Mother-country, and desired her assistance. You was largely assisted, and by that means wholly delivered from all your enemies.

After a time, your Mother-country desiring to be reimbursed for some part of the large expence she had been at, laid a small tax (which she had always a right to do) on one of her Colonies.

But how is it possible, that the taking this reasonable and legal step, should have set all America in a flame?

I will tell you my opinion freely; and perhaps you will not think it improbable. I speak the more freely, because I am unbiassed: I have nothing to hope or fear from either side. I gain nothing either by the Government or by the Americans, and probably never shall. And I have no prejudice to any man in America: I love you as my brethren and countrymen.

11. My opinion is this. We have a few men in England, who are determined enemies

mies to Monarchy. Whether they hate his present Majesty on any other ground, than because he is a King, I know not. But they cordially hate his office, and have for some years been undermining it with all diligence, in hopes of erecting their grand idol, their dear Commonwealth upon its ruins. I believe they have let very few into their design: (although many forward it, without knowing any thing of the matter) but they are steadily pursuing it, as by various other means, so in particular by inflammatory papers, which are industriously and continually dispersed, throughout the town and country: by this method they have already wrought thousands of the people, even to the pitch of madness. By the same, only varied according to your circumstances, they have likewise inflamed America. I make no doubt, but these very men are the original cause of the present breach between England and her Colonies. And they are still pouring oil into the flame, studiously incensing each against the other, and opposing under a variety of pretences, all measures of accommodation. So that although the Americans, in general, love the English, and the English in general, love the Americans, (all, I mean that are not yet cheated and exasperated by these artful men) yet the rupture is growing wider every day, and none can tell where it will end.

These good men hope it will end, in the total defection of North America from England. If this were effected, they trust the
English

English in general would be so irreconcilably disgusted, that they should be able, with or without foreign assistance, intirely to overturn the government : especially while the main of both the English and Irish forces, are at so convenient a distance.

12. But, my brethren, would this be any advantage to *you* ? Can *you* hope for a more desirable form of government, either in England or America, than that which you now enjoy ? After all the vehement cry for liberty, what more liberty can you have ? What more religious liberty can you desire, than that which you enjoy already ? May not every one among you worship God according to his own conscience ? What civil liberty can you desire, which you are not already possessed of ? Do not you sit without restraint, *every man under his own vine* ? Do you not, every one, high or low, enjoy the fruit of your labour ? This is real, rational liberty, such as is enjoyed by Englishmen alone ; and not by any other people in the habitable world. Would the being independent of England make you more free ? Far, very far from it. It would hardly be possible for you to steer clear, between anarchy and tyranny. But suppose, after numberless dangers and mischiefs, you should settle into one or more Republics : would a republican government give you more liberty, either religious or civil ? By no means. No governments
under

under heaven are so despotic as the Republican : no subjects are governed in so arbitrary a manner, as those of a Commonwealth. If any one doubt of this, let him look at the subjects of Venice, of Genoa, or even of Holland. Should any man talk or write of the Dutch government as every cobbler does of the English, he would be laid in irons, before he knew where he was. And then woe be to him ! Republics shew no mercy.

13. " But if we submit to one tax, more will follow." Perhaps so, and perhaps not. But if they did ; if you were taxed (which is quite improbable) equal with Ireland or Scotland, still were you to prevent this by renouncing connection with England, the remedy would be worse than the disease. For O ! what convulsions must poor America feel, before any other government was settled ? Innumerable mischiefs must ensue, before any general form could be established. And the grand mischief would ensue, when it was established ; when you had received a yoke, which you could not shake off.

14. Brethren open your eyes ! Come to yourselves ! Be no longer the dupes of designing men. I do not mean any of your countrymen in America : I doubt whether any of these are in the secret. The designing men, the Ahithophels are in England,

land; those who have laid their scheme so deep, and covered it so well, that thousands who are ripening it, suspect nothing at all of the matter. These well meaning men, sincerely believing, that they are serving their country, exclaim against grievances, which either never existed, or are aggravated above measure, and thereby inflame the people more and more, to the wish of those who are behind the scene. But be not you duped any longer: do not ruin yourselves for them that owe you no good will, that now employ you only for their own purposes. and in the end will give you no thanks. They love neither England nor America, but play one against the other, in subserviency to their grand design, of overturning the English government. Be warned in time. Stand and consider before it is too late; before you have entailed confusion and misery on your latest posterity. Have pity upon your mother country! Have pity upon your own! Have pity upon yourselves, upon your children, and upon all that are near and dear to you! Let us not bite and devour one another, lest we be consumed one of another! O let us follow after peace! Let us put away our sins; the real ground of all our calamities! Which never will or can be thoroughly removed, till we fear God and honour the King.

A Sermon preached by Dr. Smith, in Philadelphia, has been lately reprinted in England. It has been much admired, but proceeds all along upon wrong suppositions. These are confuted in the preceding tract: yet I would just touch upon them again.

Dr. Smith supposes, 1. They have a right of granting their own money: that is, of being exempt from taxation by the supreme power. If they "contend for" this, they contend for neither more nor less than independency. Why then do they talk of their "rightful Sovereign?" They acknowledge no Sovereign at all.

That they contend for "the cause of liberty" is another mistaken supposition. What liberty do you want, either civil or religious? You had the very same liberty we have in England. I say, you *had*: but you have now thrown away the substance, and retain only the shadow. You have no liberty, civil or religious now, but what the Congress pleases to allow.

But

But you justly suppose, "We are by a plain *original contract* intitled to a community of privileges, with our brethren that reside in England, in every civil and religious respect, p. 19. Most true. And till you appointed your New Sovereigns, you enjoyed all those privileges. Indeed you had no vote for members of Parliament, neither have I, because I have no freehold in England: Yet the being taxed by the Parliament is no infringement either of my civil or religious liberty. And why have you no Representatives in Parliament?--- Did you ever *desire* them?

But you say again, "no power on earth has a right to grant our property *without our consent*," p. 22.

Then you have no Sovereign: for every Sovereign under heaven has a right to tax his subjects: that is, "to grant their property, with or *without their consent*." Our * Sovereign has a right to tax me, and all other Englishmen, whether we have votes for Parliament-men or no.

Vainly therefore do you complain of "unconstitutional exactions, violated rights, and mutilated charters," p. 24. Nothing

* That is, in connexion with the Lords and Commons.

is exacted, but according to the original constitution both of England, and her Colonies. Your rights are no more violated than mine, when we are both taxed by the supreme power : and your charters are no more mutilated by this, than is the charter of the city of London.

Vainly do you complain of being "made slaves." Am I, or two millions of Englishmen made slaves because we are taxed without our own consent?

You may still "rejoice in the common rights of freemen." I rejoice in all the rights of my ancestors. And every right which I enjoy, is common to Englishmen and Americans.

But shall we "surrender any part of the privileges which we enjoy, by the *express terms* of our colonization?" that is, of our charter? By no means : and none requires it of you. None desires to withhold any thing that is granted by the *express terms* of your charters. But remember ! One of your first charters, that of Massachusetts-Bay, says in *express terms*, you are exempt from paying taxes to the King, for *seven years* : plainly implying, that after those seven years you are to pay them like other subjects. And remember your last charter, that of Pennsylvania, says, in *express terms*, you are liable to taxation : Yea, it objects against being taxed by the King, unless in connexion with the Lords and Commons.

But

But "a people will resume, you say, the power, which they never surrendered, except"---No need of any exception. They never surrendered it at all; they could not surrender it; for they never had it. I pray did *the People*, unless you mean the Norman army, give William the Conqueror his power? And to which of his successors did *the people* of England (six or seven millions) give the sovereign power? This is mere political cant: words without meaning. I know but one instance in all history, wherein *the people* gave the sovereign power to any one; that was, to *Massaniello* of Naples. And I desire any man living to produce another instance in the history of all nations.

Ten times over, in different words, you "profess yourselves to be contending for liberty." But it is a vain, empty profession: unless you mean by that threadbare word, a liberty from obeying your rightful Sovereign, and from keeping the fundamental laws of your country. And this undoubtedly it is, which the confederated Colonies are now contending for.

THE END.

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